Striking power of the IAF

*352. SHRI JAYANT KUMAR MALHOUTRA: SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the striking power of the Indian Air Force is fast declining, as reported in the Times of India, dated the 14th November, 1998;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the urgent steps taken or proposed to be taken to retrieve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Post of CMD in Eastern Coalfields Ltd.

*354. SHRI JIBON ROY: SHRIMATI CHANDRA KALA PANDEY:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) since when the post of Chairman and Managing Director in Eastern Coal-fields Limited (ECL) has been lying vacant;

(b) the reasons for the delay in finding a permanent CMD inspite of the sickness of the company; and

(c) the likely date by which a permanent CMD would be posted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) The post of CMD, ECL is lying vacant since 30.11.97.

(b) The present acting CMD has filed a Writ Petition in the Delhi High Court seeking his regular appointment as CMD. The High Court vide its order dated 28.1.98 has granted a stay. Hence the post of CMD, ECL could not be filled up on tegular basis as the matter is sub-judice.

(c) Filling up the post on regular basis can be taken up on the vacation of the stay or final disposal of the Writ Petition.

Fuel Shortage in Assam

*355. SHRIMATI BASANTI SAR-MA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any fuel shortage in the State of Assam;

(b) if so, the reasons .therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to supply LPG to rural areas of Assam?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY): (a) and (b) There was a marginal back-log in LPG supplies in the State of Assam during April, 98 to Oct., 98 due to heavy rains in the State, causing floods and disruption of road traffic and occasional bandhs in the State during the period.

(c) IOC has been conducting regular survey of markets including the rural markets to explore the feasibility of putting up LPG Distributorships in rural areas also. 20 locations in Assam in Rural Areas have been approved under LPG Marketing Plan 96—98 for opening new LPG distributorships.

Irregularities in ITDC

*356. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether officials and ex-officials of I.T.D.C. have cheated Government to the tune of lakhs of rupees during the past one year,

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof;

(c) the steps teken by Government to recover the amount from the officials involved; and

(d) the steps taken to provide foolproof system so that the officers may not indulge in such unfair means in future?